

# Air Force feels jab from vaccine shortage

## Military medics delay routine booster shots for adults, children

By Leigh Anne Bierstine  
Air Force Surgeon General Public Affairs

**BOLLING AIR FORCE BASE, D.C. (AFPN)** – A temporary shortage of an adult Td vaccine in the United States is expected to impact Air Force supplies of the 2-in-1 vaccine that protects against tetanus and diphtheria.

One of the pharmaceutical companies that manufactured the vaccine stopped production last year, said officials at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta.

This left only one company, Aventis Pasteur, to produce enough vaccine for the entire country. While the new company has increased production to accommodate the country's needs, the shortage is expected to last until early next year.

In light of the shortage and the recommendations of the CDC's advisory committee on immunization practices, the Air Force is deferring all routine boosters of Td vaccine for previously immunized adults and children older than 7 until 2002 when the vaccine becomes fully available. The manufacturer is ensuring the CDC that adequate vaccine will be available for those adolescents and adults who need it most.

"The actual risk of a case of tetanus resulting from the shortage remains low, since in the United States most people have had the primary series of vaccinations," said Col Dana Bradshaw, chief of preventive medicine at the Air Force Surgeon General's Office here.

"Even so, any adult or adolescent who experiences a tetanus-prone wound and has not had a tetanus booster in the last five years should, as always, consult their local health-care provider immediately to receive the vaccine and proper treatment."

Boosters are routinely given every 10 years. However, in the event of an injury such as a cut, puncture or burn that has been contaminated with dirt, soil or saliva, a booster is recommended if the injured person has not received a tetanus booster within five years.

Today, 89 percent of Air Force people are up-to-date on their tetanus status.

New recruits who have recently joined the Air Force are the largest group to be deferred as a result of the temporary shortage, Bradshaw said.

"We highly encourage our trainees to promptly report any wounds they think may put them at risk for tetanus," he said.

People who are planning leisure travel to Third World or developing countries where the risk of contracting diphtheria is especially high, should discuss



Photo by Ann Chris Powell  
**Louise Johnson, immunizations office, gives 1st Lt Todd Kauffman, 10th Missile Squadron, an immunization shot Wednesday.**

their travel plans and immunization record with their health-care provider.

As a precaution, deploying troops will also be prioritized for Td boosters, Col Bradshaw said.

Parents should be aware the potential also exists for a shortage to develop in supplies of the Td vaccine formulated for children up to the age of 6.

Those Air Force medical facilities with limited quantities of the child's formula of the vaccine will prioritize supplies and potentially defer some children for the fourth shot if they have completed the initial series. Such deferral should not preclude admission to child-care facilities or schools. Children should still be vaccinated with all other recommended vaccines according to published childhood immunization schedules.

The Air Force is following CDC guidelines that require health-care providers to track patients in need of the Td booster. Air Force hospitals and clinics worldwide are using the Air Force Complete Immunization Tracking Application to track patients in need of the booster.

"Personnel deferred for routine boosters will be notified and brought up-to-date when supplies return to normal," Col Bradshaw said.

About 30 to 45 cases of tetanus occur annually nationwide, CDC officials said.

The center has reported no increase in reports during the current shortage, and no hospitalizations for tetanus have been reported in the Air Force since 1990.



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**Col Dana Bradshaw**  
Chief of preventive medicine  
Air Force Surgeon General's Office

## Star Wars missile intercept a success

**Vandenberg AFB, CALIF.** – A modified Minuteman Intercontinental Ballistic Missile prototype interceptor successfully targeted and destroyed an unarmed Minuteman II ICBM target vehicle over the central Pacific Ocean on July 14.

The planned interception took place about 10 minutes after the interceptor was launched, at an altitude of more than 140 miles above the Earth.

The interceptor destroyed the unarmed warhead at about 15,000 mph.

The test was conducted in support of the Ground-based Midcourse Defense Segment, formerly called the National Missile Defense Program, by the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization in Washington, and the 30th Space Wing, Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif.

An ICBM target vehicle was launched from Vandenberg at 10:40 p.m. EDT. The ICBM prototype interceptor was launched from the Ronald Reagan Missile Site Kwajalein Atoll in the Republic of the Marshall Islands, 4,800 miles away, about 20 minutes later.

"The early indications we have is that everything worked in a nominal mode," said Lt Gen Ronald Kadish, director of BMDO.

"These tests take several weeks to deduce the data, but we believe we have a successful test in all aspects at this time," he said. "This test, though, is one stop on a journey. We have a long road ahead in all the missile defense activities."

Kadish said he does not know for sure if the test met all objectives.

"In all probability, some of them were not (met)," he said. "But the early indications are that we have performance in every one of the objectives of the test."

Full test results would be available in two months, he said.

This is the first launch in support of the program this year. The last launch took place July 7, 2000.

As the missileers cheered their success, airmen from Vandenberg's 30th Security Forces Squadron took four Greenpeace members into custody for trespassing on Vandenberg's Minuteman and Brown beaches during the launch operation.

(American Force Information Service contributed to this story.)

## Air Force officials cautious about military pay problems

**RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AFPN)** – Air Force Personnel Center officials here are encouraging airmen with recent pay-status changes to verify those changes with local finance offices.

Malmstrom officials should call military pay at 731-2430.

In May or June, airmen who either became a new officer accession; finalized their re-enlistment within 30 days of their date of separation; or recently returned from a break in active service, might want to check what their pay was July 13, AFPC officials said.

The recommendation is being made after some airmen with pay-status changes in May and June weren't paid correctly at the end of June.

Officials here believe many of the problems have been fixed. "We can't say there will be no problems for this payday," said Lt Col Richard Treasure, chief of the systems requirements division Randolph AFB, Texas. "We could never guarantee that. But most, if not all, of those who were shorted expected pay or bonuses the last one or two pay periods should see their full pay restored, along with a lump sum."

(Courtesy of AFPC News Service.)